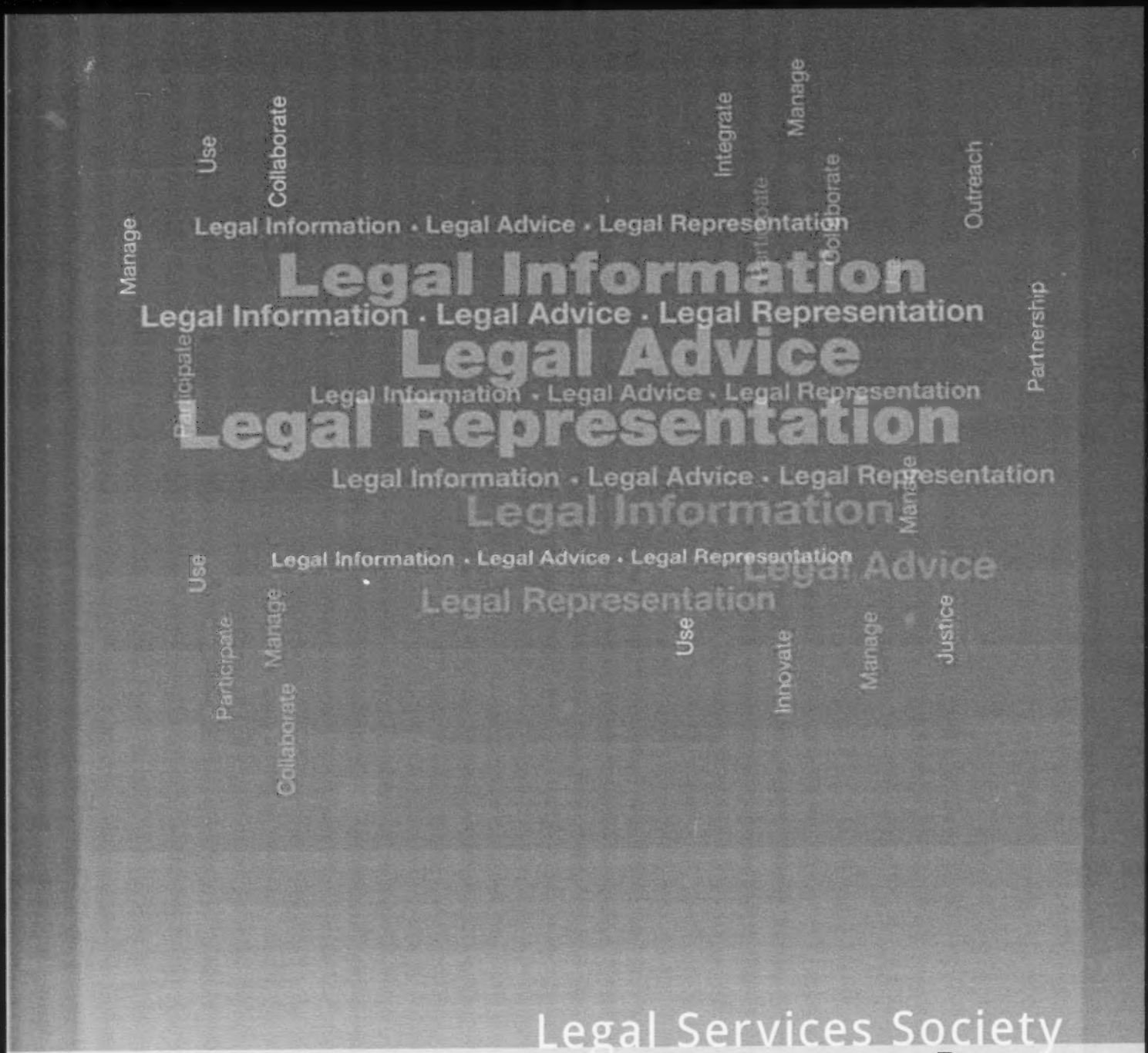

Legal Services Society

Service Plan

2012/2013 • 2014/2015

Legal Services Society

British Columbia
www.legalaid.bc.ca

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The *LSS Service Plan 2012/2013 – 2014/2015* is a publication of the Legal Services Society (LSS). LSS is a non-government organization that provides legal aid to British Columbians. LSS is funded primarily by the provincial government and also receives grants from the Law Foundation and the Notary Foundation.

The *LSS Service Plan 2012/2013 – 2014/2015* is also available in PDF on the LSS website at www.legalaid.bc.ca.

Letter from the Board Chair to the Minister Responsible and Accountability Statement

February 8, 2012

Honourable Shirley Bond
Minister of Justice
and Attorney General

Dear Ms. Attorney,

On behalf of the board of directors and employees of the Legal Services Society, I am pleased to present our service plan for 2012/2013 – 2014/2015.

To fulfill its mandate, the Legal Services Society (LSS or the society) offers legal representation for financially eligible people with serious family, child protection, criminal, or immigration problems, as well as information and advice services designed to help people resolve a wide range of legal problems on their own. These programs help achieve early and lasting solutions for people with low incomes, greater efficiency for the justice system, and prudent management of public funds.

As in previous years, the society's key challenges continue to be driven by external factors such as the economy, the number of people charged with criminal offences, family breakup, legislative policies, the number of children placed in government care, and the revenue available to the society. LSS is also finding it increasingly difficult to find lawyers willing to take legal aid cases at the tariff rates provided by current revenues.

During the past fiscal year, LSS successfully advanced two strategic initiatives outlined in the 2011/2012 service plan that were identified by the board as having the greatest long-term impact on these challenges. The first was to deliver cost-effective legal aid by collaborating with other social services agencies. LSS responded by funding community organizations in 24 locations to help us deliver our services to remote, rural, and Aboriginal communities where there are often barriers to accessing legal services. The second was to encourage other justice system participants to develop protocols similar to those used by the society to manage the cost and complexity of large criminal cases. LSS applauds the Minister of Justice and Attorney General for establishing an inter-ministerial committee to examine this issue, and we are pleased to be included among the committee's members.

I am also pleased to report that the Ministry of Justice has agreed to provide LSS with an additional $2.1 million annually for our family law programs. This is the first funding increase for family law since 2005 and will ensure that we are able to maintain current levels of service despite rising costs. These programs are particularly important because they focus on achieving early and stable resolutions, often without going to court.

Despite these successes, providing people with low incomes the legal services they need remains a challenge that requires a long-term vision on two fronts. The first is operational. The society will test new delivery models, evaluate quality assured services, and refine our work to ensure we continue to get the most out of every dollar we spend.

The second front is strategic. At LSS, we believe the key to improving legal aid is to develop a more efficient and effective justice system. The society has had considerable success in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of legal aid. Over the past nine years, we have changed legal aid from a court-centred service that focused only on ensuring fair process, to a client-centred service that focuses on helping people find timely and lasting solutions to their legal problems. This solution-oriented problem-solving approach is a benefit to both the justice system and those who use it because it helps people resolve their problems, get out of the courts, and return to their normal lives. LSS intends to discuss with justice system stakeholders how our experience and expertise in legal aid reform can be used to create a better justice system, because improving access to justice for all British Columbians will also improve legal aid for those who need it most.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the dedication of my fellow board members and LSS staff. In addition to carrying out their regular duties, many are involved in legal aid and justice reform initiatives at a local, national, and international level. They are the society's greatest resource.

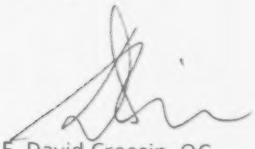
The government has recently announced a review of all Crown corporations. Crown corporations are all expected to participate and implement the results. At this time, neither the scope nor the anticipated outcomes of the review are known. Accommodating the demands of this process may replace some of the priorities outlined in this service plan.

Statement of accountability

The *Legal Services Society Service Plan 2012/2013 – 2014/2015* was prepared under the board's direction in accordance with the Budget Transparency and Accountability Act and the BC Reporting Principles. The plan is consistent with the government's strategic priorities and fiscal plan. The board is accountable for the contents of the plan, including what has been included in the plan and how it has been reported.

All significant assumptions, policy decisions, events, and identified risks, as of January 1, 2012, have been considered in preparing the plan. The performance measures presented are consistent with the society's mandate and goals, and focus on aspects critical to the organization's performance. The targets in this plan have been determined based on an assessment of the society's operating environment, forecast conditions, risk assessment, and past performance.

Yours truly,



E. David Crossin, QC
Chair, LSS Board of Directors

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Vision, Mission, Values

To better reflect our commitment to an integrated legal aid model, the society revised its vision, mission, and values statements in 2010/2011. These statements, which guide our work, are listed below.

Our vision

Our vision is a British Columbia where all people are able to find timely and lasting solutions to their legal issues that improve their quality of life.

Our mission

Our mission is to provide innovative and integrated services that enable clients to effectively address their legal issues in a broad social context.

LSS values

We value:

- making a positive difference in our clients' lives through legal aid services;
- engaging clients in finding solutions that meet their legal needs;
- recognizing diverse cultures and perspectives;
- compassion, integrity, and respect in our relationships with clients, staff, and stakeholders;
- collaboration with service partners and stakeholders;
- innovative approaches to solving problems;
- excellence and continuous improvement; and
- accountability and openness.

Organization Overview

The **Legal Services Society (LSS or the society)** provides legal aid in British Columbia. Created by the Legal Services Society Act in 1979, LSS is a non-profit organization that remains independent of government. Our priority is to serve the interests of people with low incomes.

LSS core services

Core legal aid services include legal information, advice, and representation.

- **Legal information:** The society's legal information services are delivered by front-line staff, including Aboriginal community legal workers (ACLWs), legal information outreach workers (LIOWs), and local agents, and through publications and websites. Other information services include training and support for community advocates who work with LSS clients. LSS also collaborates with community partners and government agencies to ensure people with low incomes have access to the services they need to solve their legal issues.
- **Legal advice:** LSS offers legal advice through criminal and family duty counsel in courthouses across BC; through immigration duty counsel for people in detention at the Canada Border Services Agency's enforcement centre in Vancouver; through the Family LawLINE; and through the Brydges Line telephone service for people who have been or may be arrested. LSS also provides family advice lawyers at various locations. LSS advice services may be subject to a financial eligibility test.
- **Legal representation:** LSS provides legal representation for financially eligible people with serious family, child protection, or criminal law problems. Legal representation is also available for people who face a refugee or deportation hearing, a Mental Health Review Panel or BC Review Board hearing, or who have a prison issue for which the Charter of Rights and Freedoms establishes a right to counsel.

LSS clients

Every year, hundreds of thousands of BC residents receive legal aid information, advice, and representation services. We strive to engage our clients in finding solutions to their legal problems. By taking an integrated approach, legal aid services can help clients prevent future legal issues and increase their ability to positively contribute to society.

Legal aid clients are among the province's most vulnerable and marginalized citizens. Our clients do not have the financial resources — or frequently the educational, social, or health resources — to effectively access the justice system when their families, freedom, or safety are at risk. Of the 27,900 clients who were referred to a lawyer in 2010/2011, over 69% had less than a high school education and over 26% were Aboriginal.

LSS mandate

Under Section 9 of the current LSS Act, the society's mandate is to:

- help people solve their legal problems and to facilitate access to justice,
- establish and administer an effective and efficient system for providing legal aid to people in BC, and
- provide advice to the Attorney General about legal aid and access to justice for people in BC.

Section 9 also states that the society is to:

- give priority to identifying and assessing the legal needs of people with low incomes in BC,
- consider the perspectives of both justice system service providers and the general public,
- coordinate legal aid with other aspects of the justice system and community services, and
- be flexible and innovative in carrying out its mandate.

Section 11(4) of the act limits the amount of legal aid the society can provide to any client to "the extent of legal or other services that a reasonable person of modest means would use to resolve the problem."

Governance

The society is governed by a nine-member board of directors. Under its bylaws, the board's role is "to ensure the effective governance of the society through setting direction, monitoring performance, and hiring and supporting the executive director."

LSS is committed to strong corporate governance practices that enable public accountability and transparency. The society adheres to the governance principles established by the Board Resourcing and Development Office (BRDO) and is in full compliance with BRDO guidelines. To maintain excellence in board governance, LSS reviews its governance framework regularly to ensure it meets the society's ongoing business needs while being consistent with recognized best practices.

Board of directors

The governance framework of the board consists of policies and bylaws that reflect established governance best practices. Of the nine board members:

- five are appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Minister of Justice and Attorney General, and
- four are appointed by the Law Society of BC after consultation with the executive of the BC Branch of the Canadian Bar Association.

The LSS Act outlines the need for the board as a whole to have a range of knowledge, skills, and experience in such areas as:

- business management and the financial affairs of public and private sector organizations;
- law and the operation of courts, tribunals, and alternative dispute resolution processes;
- the provision of legal aid;
- BC's cultural and geographic diversity; and
- the social and economic circumstances associated with the special legal needs of people with low incomes.

At their first meeting in each fiscal year, the directors of the board elect a board chair and an Executive Committee. Headed by the board chair and consisting of at least three other board directors, the Executive Committee holds all the powers of the board between meetings except the power to fill vacancies on or alter the membership of board committees and specific powers excluded by resolution of the board.

LSS Board of Directors (at January 1, 2012)	
Board members	**Board committees**
E. David Crossin, QC (Vancouver)	Chair, LSS Board of Directors Chair, Executive Committee
Barbara Brink, CM, OBC (Vancouver)	Member, Stakeholder Engagement Committee Member, Finance Committee Lead board member on governance
Thomas (Tom) Christensen, lawyer (Vernon)	Vice-Chair, LSS Board of Directors Member, Executive Committee Chair, Stakeholder Engagement Committee
Sheryl N. Lee, CA (Vancouver)	Chair, Finance Committee Member, Executive Committee
Deanna Ludowicz, lawyer (Grand Forks)	Member, Executive Committee Lead board member for Strategic Planning Session 2012
Suzette Narbonne (Gibsons)	Member, Stakeholder Engagement Committee
Todd L. Ormiston (Victoria)	Member, LSS Board of Directors
Darrell J. Wickstrom, lawyer (Vancouver)	Member, Finance Committee
Marion Wright (Campbell River)	Member, Stakeholder Engagement Committee

The board also establishes two board committees to help it carry out its responsibilities:

- the Finance Committee, which makes recommendations on the society's finances, funding, fiscal allocations, and risk management; and
- the Stakeholder Engagement Committee, which recommends ways to strengthen the society's relationships with key stakeholders in the justice system.

The chair, in consultation with the society's executive director, appoints the members of these committees, unless the board directs otherwise. For more information about the LSS board and its governance practices, visit the society's website at www.legalaid.bc.ca and see "Board of directors" under "About us." Direct specific inquiries to the assistant corporate secretary at corporate.governance@lss.bc.ca.

Senior management

The board of directors appoints an executive director to administer the business of the society. The executive director chairs the society's Executive Management Committee (EMC), which is made up of the directors of the four internal LSS divisions. EMC provides LSS with overall strategic direction, policy, and planning.

EMC also makes final decisions on strategic and operational issues brought forward by the Operations, Planning, and Policy Committee, which is chaired by the director of Strategic Planning, Policy, and Human Resources. This management committee advises EMC on interdivisional policy and planning, strategic and service planning, management initiatives, operational support issues, and policies for coverage, eligibility, and tariffs.

LSS directors (at January 1, 2012)

Mark Benton, QC, Executive Director

Harold V. J. Clark, CHRP, Strategic Planning, Policy, and Human Resources

Sherry MacLennan, lawyer, Public Legal Information and Applications

Heidi Mason, lawyer, Legal Advice and Representation

Doug Wong, CA, Finance and Corporate Services

LSS senior managers (at January 1, 2012)

Brad Daisley, lawyer, Communications and General Counsel

Noreen Finnerty, CHRP, Human Resources and Organizational Development

Craig Goebel, lawyer, Intake and Regional Centres

David Griffiths, lawyer, Legal Services

Richard Lee, CA, Audit and Investigation

John Simpson, lawyer, Community and Publishing Services

Kathryn Spracklin, Strategic Planning and Policy

Janice Staryk, Tariff Services

Mihai Strusievici, Information Technology

Eugene Wandell, CMA, Finance and Administration

Strategic Context

The *LSS Service Plan 2012/2013 – 2014/2015* outlines the strategic approach the society will take to achieve its mission to provide innovative and integrated services that enable clients to effectively address their legal issues in a broad social context. Our mission is supported by the long-term goals outlined in this plan: to ensure that clients use legal aid services, participate in the process of resolving their issues, and have access to services that are integrated with the work of other service providers so clients can also get help with related legal and non-legal issues.

The justice system is at a critical juncture. Rising costs, increasing case complexity, and court delays all act as impediments to clients seeking timely and lasting solutions to their legal problems. LSS is a proven leader in delivering effective low-cost scalable solutions that help clients navigate the justice system, such as legal information outreach workers, collaborative services, and telephone advice lines. In the coming years, LSS has the opportunity to play an even greater leadership role in bringing innovative change, not just to legal aid, but to the justice system as a whole.

LSS remains committed to improving client outcomes, but cannot accomplish this alone. Significant challenges facing the justice system include demographic trends (greying of the bar), rising costs for large cases that risk consuming a growing share of justice system resources, and a lack of coordination among justice system partners.

To be successful, LSS needs to deliver services in an effective, efficient, and innovative manner. The key challenges affecting the society's ability to achieve its mission are financial pressures; fluctuating service demand; the evolving and rising cost of legal aid infrastructure, capacity and staff commitment; and stakeholder relations.

- **Financial pressures:** Ongoing low interest rates reduce LSS's revenue from non-government sources. Additional fiscal risks include higher case costs due to legislative changes, court delays, and effective but expensive alternative dispute resolution models.
- **Fluctuating service demand:** Increased financial pressure makes it critical for LSS to effectively monitor and understand key factors influencing demand. These factors include changes in government policy direction and economic indicators (e.g., unemployment rates). Moreover, demand for services among key client groups (Aboriginal clients or underserved communities) is not adequately met because legal aid services are not accessible to or appropriate for these groups.
- **Legal aid infrastructure:** To manage financial pressures and fluctuations in service demand, and deliver needed services, the society needs an agile and responsive legal aid infrastructure (lawyers, staff, and technological solutions).

Our ability to place cases within a reasonable timeframe is undermined by threats to lawyer supply, including an aging bar, an insufficient number of newly called lawyers taking cases, and the dissatisfaction of the bar with the justice system.

To help clients achieve timely and lasting solutions, LSS also requires an information technology system that is flexible and responsive to support innovative service delivery models in uncertain environments. Significant resource investments will be required to implement such a system and ensure services are not disrupted.

The society's ability to achieve its goals depends on the commitment of experienced and engaged staff. Our staff faces ongoing challenges to providing innovative services with limited human and financial resources. Through community and employee engagement initiatives, LSS is building organizational capacity to undertake the strategies laid out in this plan and respond effectively to our changing environment.

- **Stakeholder relations:** Changes in the external environment require LSS to take a leadership role in facilitating access to justice initiatives that ensure clients receive the best possible services. We can only do this if stakeholders are clear on our strategic direction and perceive us to have effective processes and controls. However, the society's ability to collaborate with service partners on innovative projects is limited by insufficient resources and competing priorities throughout the justice system.

Key Strategic Issues

The following tables outline the primary strategic issues identified for 2012/2013 – 2014/2015, an assessment of the risks and opportunities these issues represent, and the society's intended responses. The goals referenced in the tables below appear in the next section, "Goals, Strategies, Measures, and Targets."

Issue	Risk statement	LSS response	LSS opportunity
Financial pressures			
Low interest rates reduce LSS revenue from non-government sources. Rising case costs affect the society's ability to deliver services.	(a) Core funding is reduced and LSS has to cut existing service, tariff, or operational expenses. (b) Funding from non-government sources is reduced or eliminated due to low interest rates. (c) Tariff costs exceed budget.	Demonstrate that an adequately funded legal aid plan reduces the overall burden on the social services system by resolving problems before they escalate. (a) Show value for money. (a) Explore ways to generate additional revenue for the society. (b) Explore alternative service delivery models. (c) Monitor case costs and respond accordingly. (c) (See Goal 4)	Continue to make the best use of LSS resources by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of legal aid services and service delivery.
Issue	**Risk statement**	**LSS response**	**LSS opportunity**
Fluctuating service demand			
Demand is influenced by legislative change, shifts in government policy, and an increase in the public's awareness of available legal aid services. Ongoing economic downturn may trigger a higher incidence of legal problems among client groups. Demand for services among key client groups is not being adequately met because services are not accessible to or appropriate for them.	(a) Referral volumes are not aligned with the available budget. (b) Current service delivery model does not effectively deliver services to Aboriginal clients and clients in underserved communities.	Monitor, analyze, and respond to factors influencing demand. (a) Use alternative service delivery models in key areas and revise coverage policies to better manage demand. (b) (See Goals 1 and 4)	Maintain ongoing communication with government to help stay informed about legislative change and shifts in policy. Monitor public awareness of legal aid services.

Issue	Risk statement	LSS response	LSS opportunity
Legal aid infrastructure			
Lawyer attrition due to greying of the bar is not being counterbalanced by young lawyers taking on cases. Lawyer dissatisfaction with legal aid funding and justice system inefficiencies has led to service withdrawals. LSS requires an information technology system that is flexible and can support innovative service delivery models. An engaged workforce and appropriate staffing levels are required to deliver effective services.	(a) Lawyers withdraw needed client services. (b) LSS is unable to place all cases with a lawyer within a reasonable time. (c) Information technology (IT) system changes may lead to organizational challenges and affect LSS ability to deliver services. (d) Failure to upgrade the IT system leads to disruption and creates internal challenges. (e) Further deterioration of staff engagement with the organization and current strategic direction undermines the society's ability to deliver effective services.	Develop a lawyer succession strategy to deal with greying of the bar. (b) LSS needs to bridge the gap and establish incentives to encourage young lawyers to take legal aid cases. (a/b) Develop an agile information technology system that includes an upgrade of the society's case management system. (c) Use effective change management processes. (c/d) Introduce cross-departmental teams to implement employee engagement initiatives. (e) (See Goal 4)	Promote a legal aid culture within the BC bar and educate lawyers on the benefits of legal aid.
Issue	**Risk statement**	**LSS response**	**LSS opportunity**
Stakeholder[1] relations			
The society's ability to lead and effect change to legal aid can only work if stakeholders are clear on our strategic direction and perceive us to have effective processes and controls. The society's ability to collaborate with service providers on innovative projects is limited by insufficient resources and competing priorities.	(a) LSS is unable to lead change on legal aid. (b) LSS loses its reputation for innovation because it cannot build meaningful relationships with service partners, funders, and staff. (c) Collaborative initiatives are not undertaken or are not successful because LSS and its partners have insufficient resources or competing priorities.	Communicate the value of legal aid to government and to the public. (a/b) Support a legal aid culture among justice system partners. (a/b) Explore synergies and build connections between LSS, government ministries, and community partners. (b/c) (See Goals 2, 3, and 4)	Enhance public confidence in and perceived fairness of the justice system. Strengthen LSS relationships with internal and external stakeholders across BC communities.

[1] Stakeholders are groups that have a direct or indirect interest in the society's mandate, services, and policies ie g., service partners, staff, clients, the public, justice system partners, and government).

Goals, Strategies, Measures, and Targets

The goals, strategies, and performance measures outlined in this service plan are designed to engage LSS staff, our service partners, and our clients in finding timely and lasting solutions to clients' legal issues while managing the budget.

The society's goals, continued from the 2008/2009 plan, describe our long-term commitment to building an integrated legal aid model. The strategies to achieve these goals have been adjusted in this plan to respond to changes in our internal and external environment. All adjustments are noted in the table on page 14.

Performance management system

LSS assesses its performance by surveying key stakeholder groups. LSS staff help develop the survey questions and methodology, and independent research organizations carry out the data collection and analysis to ensure data is accurate and reliable. The society also monitors and reports on key internal operational and financial data, which are tested internally.

We selected satisfaction measures to track our overall progress in achieving intended outcomes for clients. These measures also track our success in engaging the support of private lawyers, who are our primary service partners; our employees, who are critical to service quality; and the public, to whom we are ultimately accountable. Increasing levels of client and lawyer satisfaction, employee engagement, and public support will demonstrate that we are meeting these stakeholders' needs. LSS chose budget-to-actual expenditure variance as a measure of financial performance.

LSS benchmarks its performance against like organizations, where possible. By using the Common Measurement Tool, an independent client satisfaction benchmarking tool and data service provided by the Institute for Citizen-Centred Services, we are able to compare client satisfaction results against government agencies providing similar services. We benchmark our employee engagement score against the BC Public Service using statistics provided by BC Stats, the organization that conducts our Work Environment Survey and administers the same survey to all BC Public Service Employees annually. Though legal aid plans across Canada have not yet developed a common method of measuring performance, we regularly share performance and outcome information. Our lawyer satisfaction results, for example, are benchmarked against roughly comparable results from the legal aid plan in Ontario.

We set targets by considering benchmark data, calculating what would be a statistically significant change in a particular measure, and evaluating the level of improvement possible given the strategies in place and activities planned in the coming period. Meeting our targets would demonstrate continuous improvement in stakeholder satisfaction with, support for, and use of our services, as well as financial responsibility, all of which are necessary to achieve our goals.

Goal 1 - Use

People with low incomes who have legal issues use LSS services.

Strategies
1.1 Simplify the client application process to improve the accessibility of legal aid services.
1.2 Use innovative, collaborative, and flexible models (including technology) to deliver legal aid services, with an emphasis on Aboriginal and other underserved communities.
1.3 Collaborate with and enable service partners[1] to increase awareness of, confidence in, and use of legal aid services.

Performance measures	Actual	Forecast	Targets		
	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015
(a) Percent of clients satisfied with the accessibility of LSS services (tri-annual survey)	69%	N/A	N/A	73%	N/A
(b) Percent of clients satisfied with the helpfulness of LSS services (tri-annual survey)	62%	N/A	N/A	66%	N/A
(c) Percent of clients satisfied overall with LSS services (tri-annual survey)	62%	N/A	N/A	66%	N/A

Importance of these measures

Client satisfaction overall and with the accessibility and helpfulness of LSS services shows that we are providing clients with the services they need when and where they need them, fulfilling our mandate to help people solve their legal problems and facilitate access to justice.

[1] Service partners are agents or agencies LSS collaborates with to provide services, including local agents, tariff lawyers, and community agencies.

Goal 2 · Participate

People with low incomes participate in solving and avoiding legal issues.

Strategies

2.1 Provide support to front-line workers[1] to help them inform clients about legal aid services and their legal rights and responsibilities early in the process.

Performance measures	Actual	Forecast	Targets		
	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015
(a) Percent of clients satisfied with LSS support to help them participate in resolving their legal issues (tri-annual survey)	Baseline set: 59%	N/A	N/A	63%	N/A
(b) Percent of lawyers satisfied with LSS support to increase their ability to engage clients in solving their legal issues (tri-annual survey)	Baseline set: 42% (2009/2010)	N/A	46%	N/A	N/A

Importance of these measures

Clients who participate in finding solutions to their legal problems are more likely to achieve positive, lasting outcomes. Measures (a) and (b) assess the effectiveness of the support provided by LSS to clients and lawyers to help clients participate.

[1] Front-line workers are LSS staff and service partners who deal directly with legal aid clients (e.g., LIOWs and intake staff).

Goal 3 Collaborate

People with low incomes get help with related legal issues so they can solve and prevent legal problems.

Strategies
3.1 Collaborate and integrate with service partners to improve access to services for clients' related legal issues.
3.2 Provide support to front-line workers and service partners to help them assess and refer clients to services for their related legal issues.
3.3 Work with the Ministry of Justice and other ministries to develop an integrated approach to help clients address legal and related legal issues.

Performance measures	Actual	Forecast	Targets		
	2010/2012	2011/2012	2012/2013	2014/2015	2014/2015
(a) Percent of clients satisfied with the level of support LSS gave them to address their related legal issues (tri-annual survey)	Baseline set: 48%	N/A	N/A	52%	N/A
(b) Percent of lawyers satisfied with LSS support for increasing their ability to help clients address related legal issues (tri-annual survey)	Baseline set: 22% (2009/2010)	N/A	26%	N/A	N/A
(c) Percent of lawyers who support the integrated approach to providing legal aid services (tri-annual survey)	Baseline set: 71% (2009/2010)	N/A	75%	N/A	N/A

Importance of these measures

Clients who get help for their related legal issues are more likely to achieve positive, lasting solutions to their legal issues. Measure (a) tracks the effectiveness of LSS efforts to provide clients with information about services for related legal issues. Integrating services requires all service partners to have the necessary skills and resources. Measures (b) and (c) assess our progress on supplying lawyers with the tools and information to support this approach.

Goal 4 - Manage

LSS manages resources soundly.

Strategies
4.1 Effectively communicate the society's strategic direction to stakeholders.
4.2 Demonstrate value for money through evidence-based decision making[1] and enhanced business processes.
4.3 Develop and implement lawyer engagement initiatives.
4.4 Introduce cross-departmental teams to implement employee engagement initiatives.
4.5 Improve information technology systems to respond to a changing environment.

Performance measures	Actual	Forecast	Targets		
	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015
(a) Overall average employee engagement score (tri-annual survey)	Baseline set: 70 (2007/2008)	73	N/A	N/A	73
(b) Percent of lawyers satisfied with the overall support provided by LSS (tri-annual survey)	Baseline set: 62% (2009/2010)	N/A	66%	N/A	N/A
(c) Number of new lawyers taking more than three referrals in the first six months (annual measure)	Baseline set: 60	>60	>60	>60	>60
(d) Budget-to-actual expenditure variance (annual measure)*	-0.5%	<1.5%	<1.5%	<1.5%	<1.5%
(e) Percent of the public that supports the provision of legal aid services (annual survey)	89%	>90%	>90%	>90%	>90%

Importance of these measures

High employee engagement in the public sector, tracked by measure (a), is linked to improved service for clients. Measures (b) and (c) qualitatively and quantitatively assess our progress on maintaining a sustainable supply of lawyers to provide services to clients across BC. Maintaining a low budget-to-actual expenditure variance, measure (d), shows that we are effectively managing expenditures. Sustained public support for legal aid, measure (e), should enhance government confidence in our services.

*The budget-to-actual expenditure variance is calculated at year-end, using the following formula:
Variance = actual expenditures/budgeted expenditures. Specific expenditures that are budgeted separately as they occur are excluded from this calculation.

[1] Evidence-based decision making: Decision-making process based on the synthesis of internal and external evidence (e.g., data analysis, social science research, internal business intelligence, etc.)

Adjustments to Service Plan 2012/2013 – 2014/2015

	Goals	Strategies	Measures
Use Goal 1	• No change	• Shifted the focus of strategy 1.1 to focus on "simplifying the client application process" to improve accessibility. • Revised strategy 1.2 to enhance access for Aboriginal and underserved communities through innovative delivery models. • Updated strategy 1.3 to improve awareness through collaboration with stakeholders.	• No change
Participate Goal 2	• No change	• Consolidated last year's strategies into one that provides support to front-line workers to help them inform clients about how to participate in the process.	• No change
Collaborate Goal 3	• No change to the goal, but the focus has been changed to "collaborate" (from "integrate" last year).	• Strategies revised, but no change to the essence/ intentions.	• As per the society's *2010/2011 Annual Service Plan Report*, revised the existing measure to show the percent of clients satisfied with the level of support LSS gave them to address their related legal issues.
Manage Goal 4	• No change	• Shifted the focus of strategy 4.1 to effective communication with stakeholders (previously strategy 4.5). • Revised the focus of strategy 4.2 to demonstrating value for money and improving business processes. • Renumbered strategy 4.3 to focus on lawyer engagement initiatives (previously strategy 4.6). • Revised strategy 4.4 to include cross-departmental teams to implement employee engagement initiatives (previously strategy 4.1). • Introduced strategy 4.5 to focus on improving the society's information technology system to be more responsive. • Removed strategies related to legislative changes (family and immigration) (previously strategy 4.7), managing large cases (previously strategy 4.4), and implementing the simplified tariff (previously strategy 4.3).	• As per the society's *2010/2011 Annual Service Plan Report*, revised the existing measure to show the number of new lawyers who accepted more than three legal aid referrals in the first six months.

Government Letter of Expectations

LSS and the Ministry of Justice jointly approve a government letter of expectations (GLE) from the ministry to the society each year.

The government uses GLEs to communicate its priorities, mandate direction, and key performance objectives to each Crown agency for the coming year. For LSS, the government letter supplements the three-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between LSS and the ministry, which sets out the roles and responsibilities of both parties as well as the anticipated funding LSS will receive from the ministry and the priorities for allocating that funding. The GLE also supplements the LSS Act, which establishes the overall mandate and administrative framework for the society.

Our actions to address the direction set out in the GLE for 2012/2013 are outlined in the table below.

Government letter of expectations	LSS alignment
Financial performance	
Work with the government to ensure LSS meets budget variance targets.	LSS has established rigorous cost monitoring and forecasting models to help ensure the society meets budget targets.
Prepare monthly reports that set out and forecast the financial situation of the exceptional matters fund.	LSS will continue to provide monthly reports to the Ministry of Justice on exceptional matters.
Support policy, planning, and program coordination	
Cooperate and coordinate with justice system partners on justice reform initiatives that further LSS goals.	LSS will collaborate with the Ministry of Justice on justice transformation initiatives as revenue allows.
Collaborate with government on issues such as large cases.	LSS will collaborate with key stakeholders in the justice system to enhance large case management.
Promote early, collaborative dispute resolution in child protection and family law cases.	LSS will continue to support early, consensual dispute resolution in family and CFCSA cases through the simplified tariff as revenue allows.
	LSS will continue to communicate with the Ministry of Justice on government and society priorities and the LSS service plan throughout the annual planning process.

Government letter of expectations	LSS alignment
Legislative framework	
Conduct operations and financial activities consistent with the legislative and policy framework established by government.	LSS is in compliance with the LSS Act and the MOU. LSS regularly provides financial, statistical, and other information about legal aid services to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.
Communication	
Establish a working group to meet monthly, as required, to ensure effective and efficient day-to-day communication between the ministry and LSS.	LSS will participate in working group meetings to review and coordinate budget development, strategic priorities, policy and program development, issues related to legal aid and access to justice, and other issues as they arise.
Reporting	
Meet performance reporting requirements as set out in the Budget Transparency and Accountability Act, the Financial Administration Act, and the Financial Information Act.	LSS will continue to meet all reporting requirements.
Climate change	
Comply with government requirements to make the public sector carbon neutral.	LSS will implement a new environmental policy that engages staff in efforts to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. LSS will review and develop print and copy monitoring solutions to reduce paper usage; complete conversion to recycled paper; minimize business travel; and renovate our premises to sustainability standards (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). LSS will complete and file carbon neutral action reports as required.

Financial Outlook

LSS summary financial outlook 2011 – 2015 *(in millions)*

	2010/11 Actual	2011/12 Forecast	2012/13[1] Budget	2013/14[1] Forecast	2014/15[1] Forecast
Revenue					
Provincial grant funding	$71.5	$75.2	$72.3	$72.3	$72.3
Other funding	5.4	5.7	4.5	4.5	4.5
Total revenue	76.9	80.9	76.8	76.8	76.8
Expenses					
Contracted representation	55.6	61.9	57.9	57.9	57.9
Client liaison and initiatives	12.7	12.4	11.6	11.6	11.6
Infrastructure and operational support	8.6	6.6	7.3	7.3	7.3
Total expenses	76.9	80.9	76.8	76.8	76.8
Net income (deficit)[2]	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Case management system upgrade	0.0	(0.4)	(0.8)	(0.5)	0.0
Internally restricted surplus	3.7	3.3	2.5	2.0	2.0
Debt	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

[1] Government of BC funding for LSS expenditures for the years 2012/2013 through 2014/2015 is not yet confirmed.
[2] The LSS Act authorizes the society to incur expenditures and liabilities in a given fiscal year of up to, but not exceeding, its total revenue for the year and accumulated surplus from previous years.

Key assumptions

- No material changes in the number of cases prosecuted by the province and no material changes in the Provincial Court hours of service.
- Criminal cases in excess of $175,000 will be funded separately by the Ministry of Justice as per the MOU.
- No material changes in the demand for legal aid or in the poverty rate in BC.
- No provision has been made for cost increases as a result of implementation of the Balanced Refugee Reform Act or changes to the Criminal Code through Bill C10, Safe Streets & Communities Act.
- Cost estimates for the new application service delivery model are based on current and historic application volumes.

Forecast risks and sensitivities

- Unanticipated increases in the volume or average cost of cases, including increases from federal Criminal Code changes.
- The society's change to Public Sector Accounting Board reporting standards may have unanticipated consequences that could result in changes to reported revenue and expenditures.
- Changes in interest rates and economic conditions affecting non-governmental revenue sources.
- Inflationary pressures.
- 2013/14 and 2014/2015 forecasts do not represent accurate forecasts of revenue and expenditures as they are largely extrapolated from the 2012/13 budget. The cost and scope of services is expected to change over a three-year period.

Where to Find Legal Aid Services

Legal aid services are available in person or over the phone throughout the province. Legal aid applications can be made in the following communities:

Abbotsford	Penticton
Campbell River	Port Alberni
Chilliwack	Port Coquitlam
Courtenay	Prince George
Cranbrook	Prince Rupert
Dawson Creek	Quesnel
Duncan	Richmond
Fort St. James	Salmon Arm
Fort St. John	Smithers
Hazelton	Surrey
Kamloops	Terrace
Kelowna	Vancouver
Langley	Vanderhoof
Nanaimo	Vernon
Nelson	Victoria
New Westminster	Williams Lake
North Vancouver	LSS Call Centre: 1-866-577-2525

Public legal education material and information is available in the locations above and through our community partners. For more information about legal aid services, see page 1 or visit our website (www.legalaid.bc.ca/legal_aid) to find out how to access these services in your community.

For more information:

Mark Benton, QC
Executive Director
Legal Services Society
400 – 510 Burrard Street
Vancouver, BC V6C 3A8

Telephone: 604-601-6000
Website: www.legalaid.bc.ca

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LSS is funded primarily by the provincial government and also receives grants from the Law Foundation and the Notary Foundation.

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